THE WASHINGTON POST
Wednesday, Feb. 16, 1966 D9

Fred W. Friendly: One Man Who Quit

By Lawrence Laurent

FRED W. FRIENDLY, with an independence that has been his trademark through 28 years of broadcasting, made the decision all by himself to resign as President of CBS News.

Laurent

This is a rare occurrence at broadcasting networks. Usually, if a man is fired, the event is referred to as a "resignation." The toughest term ever permitted is that a departed employe's services were "terminated by mutual consent."

But Fred W. Friendly, a volatile, emotional man, quit after a disagreement with his new boss, John A. Schneider. Schneider was promoted last Wednesday from President of the CBS Television Network to Group Vice President, Broadcasting.

In the elaborate organization of CBS, Inc., Schneider had been Friendly's equal. On Wednesday, Schneider moved up, second only to Dr. Frank Stanton (president of CBS, Inc.) and to Board Chairman William Paley.

The Wednesday date is important, for on Thursday came a debate between Friendly and Schneider. Friendly wanted live TV coverage of George F. Kennan's testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Schneider decided to go with the regular schedule but added that live coverage might come this week.

The official announcement, made yesterday by Dr. Stanton, said: "Friendly feels he is unable to continue in his post as a result of a decision made by . . . Schneider not to schedule live coverage of the testimony . . ."

Stanton added: "Fred Friendly has been an outstanding leader of broadcast journalism. His contributions to the public, to his profession, and to CBS have been great indeed. My associates, his colleagues and I will miss him."

Fred's emotions were shown plainly in his letter of resignation. He called it "a matter of conscience." After the decision not to broadcast Kennan's testimony, Friendly watched the four TV monitors that are in his office. While NBC telecast the hearing, Friendly said, CBS was showing "a fifth re-run of 'I Love Lucy' and an eighth re-run of 'The Real McCoys.'

"I wanted to order up an announcement that said: 'Due to circumstances beyond our control the broadcast originally intended for this time will not be seen,'" Friendly wrote.

His letter of resignation also said: "I am resigning because the decision not to carry the hearings makes a mockery of the Paley-Stanton CND (Columbia News Division) crusade of many years that demands broadcast access to Congressional debate."

Friendly, TV's most honored producer of news documentary programs, moved to the presidency of CBS News, March 2, 1964. His success continued after he introduced the national TV "test" programs and as the Walter Cronkite news program gained ground and sometimes won higher ratings than the NBC team of Chet Huntley and David Brinkley.

FRED W. FRIENDLY
". . . a matter of conscience"

One good source in New York said yesterday: "Of course, CBS hates to lose Fred. But he stood on principle and made his fight at the wrong time. The network has no choice in such a fight but to uphold its top executive."

Speculation began immediately about Friendly's successor. The names that cropped up immediately were those of Gordon Manning and Bill Leonard. Manning was executive editor of Newsweek for three years before Friendly selected him to become CBS News vice president and director of television news in December, 1964.

At the same time, veteran broadcaster Leonard was promoted to vice president and director of news programming. The promotion came after Leonard had pioneered new techniques for covering elections.

Privately, Friendly has complained, rather mildly, that the presidency of CBS News brought him smaller earnings than he had made as a documentary producer. There's almost no doubt that he'll return to making documentaries and there's even less doubt that a network will hire him.